

Home Made Visible: Partnering with a Film Festival to Preserve IBPOC Home Movies
Katrina Cohen-Palacios

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York University Libraries Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections
AAO 2020: Building Bridges, Connecting Communities

Abstract

From 2017 to 2019, the Regent Park Film Festival's Home Made Visible project, in partnership with Charles Street Video and York University Libraries, highlighted the personal histories of Indigenous, Black, and people of colour (IBPOC) communities in the collective, public memory through an engagement with archival research, artistic creation, and public programming. The project's goal consisted of celebrating the joy captured in home movies, preserving these histories, and exploring how archives have the power to shape who we become and how we relate to one another. Funded by the Canada Council for the Arts' New Chapter program, HMOV commissioned seven films made by IBPOC artists and organized a tour of 51 exhibitions, workshops, screenings, and installations across Canada. The project also coordinated the donation of nearly 300 home movie clips from 36 families to the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections for preservation in perpetuity. This collection spans six decades documenting the everyday life of 25 IBPOC communities. It features weddings, picnics, holiday celebrations, cultural traditions, religious ceremonies, birthday parties, school performances, snowstorms, and trips around the world in a multitude of languages. This presentation will discuss the project's challenges and successes, including lessons learned from developing new partnerships and collaborative approaches to acquisition and description.

“Canadian archives are lacking in home movie footage from Indigenous people and Visible Minorities. As old film and tapes threaten to fall apart with time, Home Made Visible works to preserve this history, celebrate the joy captured in home movies, and explore how archives have the power to shape who we become and how we relate to one another.”

HMV Mission Statement

Home Made Visible mission statement and the three partnering organizations

The [Regent Park Film Festival](#) (RPFF) partnered with [Charles Street Video](#) (CSV), the technical and commissioning partner, and York University Libraries (YUL), the archival partner, to fulfill its mission which states “Canadian archives are lacking in home movie footage from Indigenous people and Visible Minorities. As old films and tapes threaten to fall apart with time, Home Made Visible works to preserve this history, celebrate the joy captured in home movies, and explore how archives have the power to shape who we become and how we relate to one another.”

RPFF is Toronto’s longest-running free community film festival that hosts year-round film screenings and workshops. RPFF is dedicated to showcasing local and international independent works relevant to people from all walks of life, with a focus on inviting those from low-income and public housing communities. RPFF presents films that aim to break stereotypes and show that no one place or person has just one story.

CSV is a non-profit production organization established in 1981 that supports media artists. It provides affordable access to equipment and post-production editing facilities for creating videos, films, installations, and other media art forms. It regularly offers workshops, training sessions and residencies. Its ethos is largely focused on encouraging an artisan, “do-it-yourself” professionalism.

The YUL Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC), established in 1970, preserves over eight kilometres of university records and private acquisitions. Areas of strength include Canadian history, fine arts (design, photography, music, film, and theatre), philosophy, environmental history, and sexual diversity.

Team



Project team members from RPFF, HMV, CSV, and YUL at the 2020 Lieutenant Governor Ontario Heritage Awards celebration. Left to right: Katrina Cohen-Palacios, Elizabeth Mudenyo, Safia Abdigir, Ananya Ohri, Greg Woodbury and Angela Britto.

HOME MADE VISIBLE: Ananya Ohri, Elizabeth Mudenyo, Safia Abdigir; **CHARLES STREET VIDEO:** Greg Woodbury, Konrad Skreta; **REGENT PARK FILM FESTIVAL:** Tendisai Cromwell, Shafia Shaikh, Mandeq Hassan, Weeda Azim, Marina Fathalla, Shannon Gagnon, Camille Johnson, Jennifer Su, Marianne Rellin, Sabrina Jahan, Derek Aubichon, Chad Mohr; **HMV ADVISORY PANEL:** Michèle Pearson Clarke, Richard Fung, Stephen Gong, Teresa M. Ho, Ambreen Siddiqui, Ariel Smith, Deanna Wong, Wanda Vanderstoop, Indu Vashist; **YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES:** several librarians, archivists, and staff members; **DIGITIZATION, OUTREACH, EXHIBITION, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

The team

So many individuals contributed to the success of HMV. Impossible to list everyone involved, the [team](#) worked together, both synchronously and asynchronously, to meet (and succeed) HMV's ambitious goal

Home Made Visible

- Ananya Ohri, Artistic Director
- Elizabeth Mudenyo, Special Projects Manager
- Safia Abdigir, Special Projects Coordinator

Charles Street Video

- Greg Woodbury, Operations Manager
- Konrad Skreta, Video/Audio Technician

Regent Park Film Festival

- Tendisai Cromwell, Executive Director
- Shafia Shaikh, Marketing and Outreach Manager
- Mandeq Hassan, Weeda Azim, and Marina Fathalla; 2017-19 Special Projects Assistants
- Shannon Gagnon, Evaluations and Archiving Coordinator*
- Camille Johnson, Jennifer Su and Weeda Azim, 2017-19 Outreach Coordinators
- Marianne Rellin, HMV Tour Brand Designer
- Sabrina Jahan, HMV Brand Designer
- Derek Aubichon, HMV Symposium Designer
- Chad Mohr, Web Developer

HMV Advisory panel: Michèle Pearson Clarke, Richard Fung, Stephen Gong, Teresa M. Ho, Ambreen Siddiqui, Ariel Smith, Deanna Wong, Wanda Vanderstoop, Indu Vashist

* Many thanks to Shannon Gagnon, the evaluations and archiving coordinator, who surveyed team members to gather data and draft [the final grant report](#) which is referenced several times in this presentation.

The institutions on this slide represent several individuals who directly contributed to this project, for example, YUL librarians, archivists, and staff mentioned later on in this presentation. Not represented on the slide are those who played an indirect, yet critical role; for example, postal workers delivered participants' home movie submissions across Canada and the staff at the digitization, outreach, exhibition, and community partner organizations.

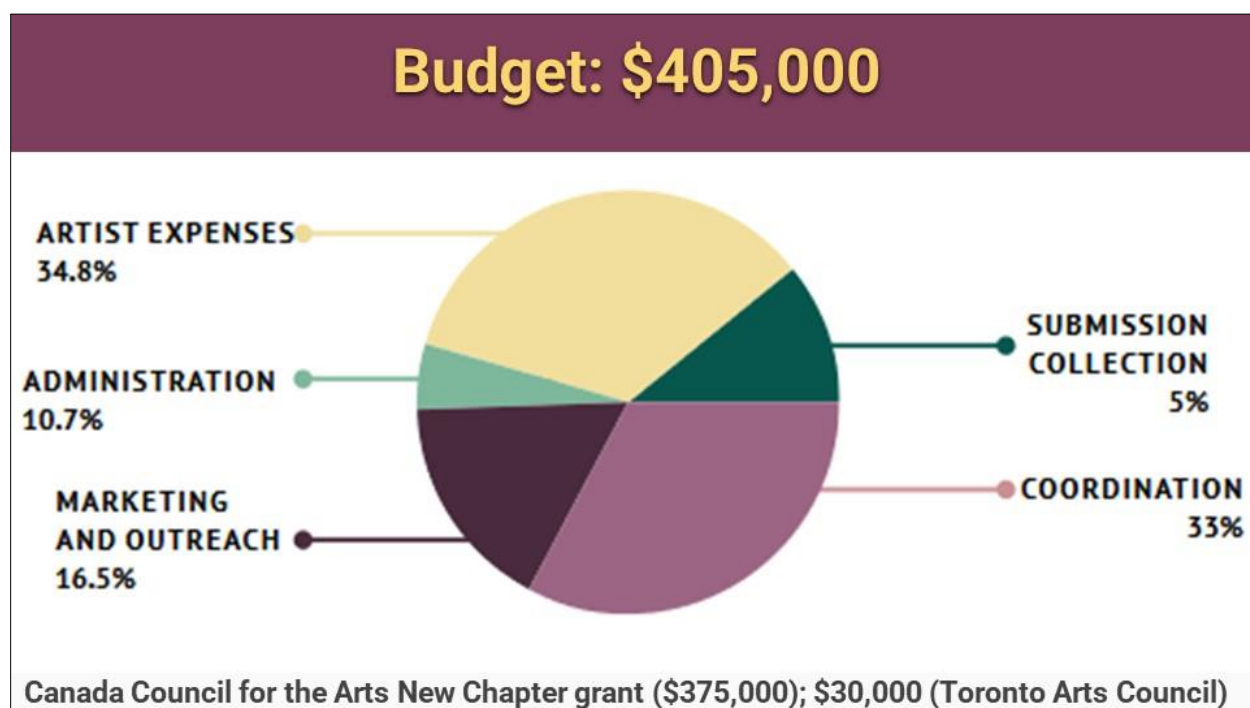
Partnerships	
Niagara Custom Lab Film Sponsor	ImagineNATIVE, Vtape, Winnipeg Film Group, DOXA Documentary Community Partners
Centre for Art Tapes, Film and Video Arts Society Alberta, Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative, Vidéographe Regional Digitization and Outreach Partners	Arts Victoria, Cowichan Culture, CCPAC, Centre for Race and Culture, Emmedia, South Asian Studies Institute Outreach Partners
Toronto Public Library, Vancouver Public Library, Edmonton Public Library, Thompson Public Library, Thunder Bay Public Library, Kahnawake Library, Federicton Public Library, Yukon Government, Halifax Public Libraries, Toronto Media Arts Centre, Sioux Lookout Public Library Exhibition Partners	Family Camera Network Provided invaluable support that helped inform this project

Partnerships

The project's nationwide focus meant that the Toronto-based team needed to reach out beyond the city, create networks, and attract participation from across the country. With this in mind, HMV formed [partnerships](#) with several organizations across Canada. As such, the project's depended on the necessary and time-consuming labour of building relationships with many individuals, communities, and organizations. Partners included:

- *Film Sponsor:* Niagara Custom Lab;
- *Regional Digitization and Outreach Partners:* Centre for Art Tapes, Film and Video Arts Society Alberta, Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative, and Vidéographe;
- *Exhibition Partners:* Toronto Public Library, Vancouver Public Library, Edmonton Public Library, Thompson Public Library, Thunder Bay Public Library, Kahnawake

- Library, Fredericton Public Library, Yukon Government, Halifax Public Libraries, Toronto Media Arts Centre, Sioux Lookout Public Library;
- *Community Partners*: ImagineNATIVE, Vtape, Winnipeg Film Group, DOXA Documentary;
 - *Outreach Partners*: Arts Victoria, Cowichan Culture, CCPAC, Centre for Race and Culture, Emmedia, South Asian Studies Institute;
 - and the Family Camera Network (provided invaluable support that helped informed this project)



Budget

The project also depended on a budget of \$405,000 with \$375,000 from the Canada Council for the Art New Chapter grant and \$30,000 from the Toronto Arts Council.

- 34.8% artist expenses (commission, symposium, artist fees, tour expenses)
- 33% coordination (project staff and advisory)
- 16.5% marketing and outreach (PR agency, advertising, graphic designers, web development, printing and distributing marketing materials)
- 10.7% administration and overhead (equipment, printing, copying, etc.)
- 5% submission collection (mailings, conversions, storage materials)

These figures do not include YUL in-kind contributions including archivist/librarian/staff salaries, operational expenses (such as monetary appraisal for the gift-in-kind donations), and costs associated with perpetual digital storage and preservation.

Understanding this – along with the number of individuals and organizations involved – help demystify the thought that a sole archivist with a shoestring budget can pursue a similar project by emphasizing the resources required by HMV. Biased, but my suggestion for future projects

would be to add a budget line for a dedicated project archivist to consult with potential donors during the project, improve communication between HMV and CSV, and expedite processing the material (as I am still processing material received over a year ago).

Three concurrent phases

1. Invite IBPOC across Canada to digitize and archive their home movies from the 20th century for free [...]
2. Commission IBPOC media artists to create works that explore how archives shape our stories [...]
3. Engage with the public through a nationwide tour exhibiting the completed artworks, and selected clips of home movies across Canada, to start conversations on how our diverse histories [...]

Three concurrent phases

Home Made Visible consisted of three concurrent phases:

1. Invited IBPOC across Canada to digitize and archive their home movies from the 20th century for free. The full collection is housed with the project's archival partner, York University Libraries. A selection of clips is available for public streaming on the [project website](#).
2. Engaged IBPOC media artists to create works that explore how archives shape the ways we engage with the colonial system and think about collaboration and coexistence between our many communities. (Note: These media artists did not use home movies collected through Home Made Visible in their project. They worked with researched materials of their own.)
3. Toured an exhibit of the completed artworks, and selected clips of home movies across Canada, to start conversations on how our diverse histories converge on this land and reimagine the terms in which we shape our shared future. The tour also included workshops led by local instructors, offered hands-on opportunities for communities to engage with archives through zine-making, oral storytelling, free-writing, postcards as personal archives, and stop-motion filmmaking.

Achievements

Goals	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitize 50 items • 12 commissioned works by POC artists paid \$3,500 each • Tour across Canada at five libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 294 items digitized • 7 commissioned works delivered by IBPOC artists paid \$6,000 each • 16 tour stops including Toronto, Halifax, Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Kahnawake, Brampton, Fredericton, Vancouver, Thompson (MB), Edmonton, and Whitehorse • Workshop facilitators paid \$675 (\$300 for preparation and \$375 for workshop delivery)

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- Commission 12 artworks by POC artists paid \$3,500 each
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- 16 tour stops including Toronto, Halifax, Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Kahnawake, Brampton, Fredericton, Vancouver, Thompson (MB), Edmonton, and Whitehorse. Workshop facilitators were [paid \\$675](#) (\$300 for preparation and \$375 for the workshop).

Home Made Visible collection

“So much of the stories that are told about Indigenous and visible minorities [in archives] are about adversity, and those are important stories to tell. What is also important is the strength, the flare, the play, the joy that makes up who we are, and home movies are a great way to remember that.” - Ananya Ohri

Home Made Visible collection

The remainder of this presentation will focus on the logistics of collaboratively acquiring, describing, and processing the [collection](#) of home movies from the perspective of the archivist (me) who liaised with the HMV team. What I loved most about this project is captured in this quote by HMV artistic director [Ananya Ohri](#): “So much of the stories that are told about Indigenous and visible minorities [in archives] are about adversity, and those are important stories to tell. What is also important is the strength, the flare, the play, the joy that makes up who we are, and home movies are a great way to remember that.” Having recently processed the fonds of anti-racism community activists [Jean Augustine](#), [Carl James](#), and [Beverley Salmon](#), it was refreshing to work on archival material that focused on joy and everyday life captured in the home movies.

Home Made Visible collection

- Nearly 300 video clips
- 39 families represented
- 13 donor interview recordings
- Spans from 1950s to mid-2000s
- 25 communities represented
- Multitude of languages
- Footage from across the globe
- Documents everyday life of IBPOC communities



A video montage previewing a selection of Home Made Visible donations is available at <https://vimeo.com/29689>

Home Made Visible collection

The HMV [collection](#) contains nearly 300 video clips documenting the daily life of 25 IBPOC communities. Footage from the 1950s to mid-2000s captures winter snowstorms, wedding rituals, summer picnics, holiday traditions, birthday celebrations, video letters to grandma, school performances, and family vacations in a multitude of languages. Thirteen project participants also donated their interview audio recordings where they discuss and describe their footage with HMV team members. A [preview trailer](#) of the collection is available.



Responsibilities

Responsibilities were divided amongst the three project partners. RPFF built community connections, CSV contributed technical and media expertise, and YUL provided long-term preservation and access.

Home Made Visible

- Promotion
- Review submissions
- Donor relations
- Descriptions

Charles Street Video

- Digitization*
- Edit digitized home movies to create clips for donations

*Film reels were digitized by Niagara Custom Lab

York University Libraries

- Consult on metadata creation and participant forms
- Accessioning
- Finalizing description
- Preservation
- Providing access

With this division of labour, the archives developed an arms-length relationship with donors (participants, families, and communities). While I would have loved to be involved with donor relations and the acquisition aspect of the project it was not possible due to limited resources.

As well, in an attempt to respect the HVM team's autonomy, I wanted to keep a respectful distance — perhaps becoming a bit too far removed — from the process. This eventually impacted my ability to efficiently process records because I was also very passive in soliciting (or receiving) descriptions from HVM and media files from CSV. As such, these outputs often trickled in asynchronously and independently of one another; receiving descriptions from HVM but waiting months for the files from CSV, or vice versa.

Timeline

- 2016 preparations and proposals
- 2017-2019 grant funded activities
- 2019-2020 archival processing



The poster for 'HOME made VISIBLE' features a portrait of an elderly woman with glasses and a purple background. Text on the poster includes: 'JANUARY-JUNE 2019 | ACROSS CANADA', 'REGENT PARK FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS', 'HOME made VISIBLE', 'FREE EXHIBITIONS, SCREENINGS & WORKSHOPS IN LIBRARIES ACROSS CANADA', 'FIND PARTICIPATING LIBRARY BRANCHES NEAR YOU: HOMEMADEVISIBLE.CA/TOUR', and social media handles like '#HomeMadeVisible' and '@RegentParkFilm'.

Timeline

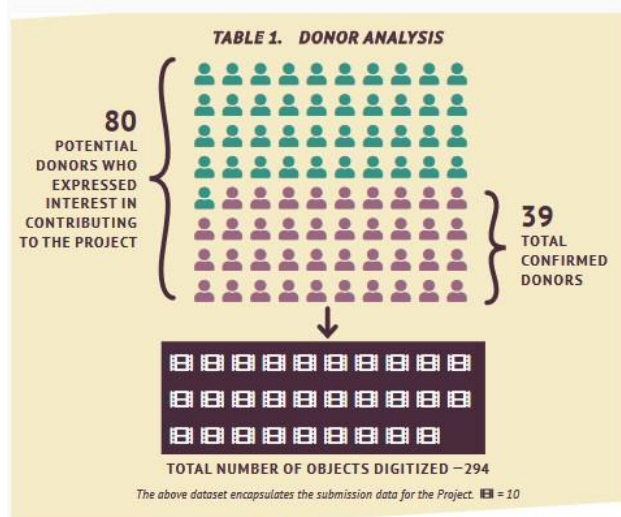
While officially a two year funded project starting in August 2017 and wrapping up in August 2019, the project's timeline spans for over four years. HVM started in September 2016 when Ananya Ohri reached out to YUL about a potential partnership. A month later, she met with Michael Moir (the university archivist) and Kathy Elder (now retired media librarian) to discuss the project. Later that year based on her conversations with Moir and Elder, Ohri submitted the grant proposals to fund the project.

After RPFF was awarded the CCA grant in June 2017, HVM and YUL formalized their partnership in September 2017 with a signed memorandum of understanding. A month later, I joined the project to advise on workflows and metadata standards for the project's contributed descriptions, eventually also becoming the processing archivist when my contract was renewed in January 2018.

The first donations arrived in May 2018 and accruals followed in June 2018, August 2018, September 2018, October 2018, July 2019, August 2019, and September 2019. The archival collection was processed in batches in May 2019, August 2019, January 2020, February 2020,

March 2020, and May 2020. I hope to complete the remaining processing work by December 2020.

Acquiring IBPOC Home Movies



- Self-selected donors indicated through submission process
- 294 items digitized
- avg. 7.5 items/donor
- ca. 190 film reels
- 29 donors from ON
- Recruitment via RPFF networks

Challenges: low levels of submissions beyond Ontario and low levels of participation from Indigenous families

Acquiring IBPOC home movies

Participation

- Between 2017 and 2019, there were several, rolling nationwide calls to contribute to the project. Out of 80 inquiries of interest, 39 participants were accommodated (approximately half) and the remaining 41 did not in the project. Reasons included an unwillingness to submit the required five minutes of footage, unresponsiveness, not meeting the IBPOC demographic criteria, and inquiries beyond the capacity of the project.
- On average, 7.5 items were submitted for digitization (ie., multiple film reels, tapes) by each donor.
- Most submissions consisted of film reels (190 out of 294 media carriers). This is most likely due to the high cost of equipment to digitize the material (upwards of \$2,000 for a used scanner). I should also note that though magnetic media (cassettes) represented a smaller number of submitted media carriers, the associated footage represents a higher minute count per object (ex: up to 2 hours per cassette).
- In the end, most donors participated in the project because of connections to—and their trust in—the RPFF through their network of family, friends, and colleagues.

Challenges

- “Low levels of archival submissions beyond Ontario. [...]There were four donors from the West Coast, but since they were analog film materials, all submissions were sent to Ontario to be transferred at Niagara Custom Lab; this sits largely in contrast against the 29 donors from the Ontario region.” (report, p.15)
- “Low levels of Indigenous submissions. The Festival had been historically POC run and predominantly had relationships within these non-Indigenous communities. The Project had a limited window of time for creating lasting relationships and trust with new Indigenous community groups.” (report, p.16)

Donor Concerns

- Damage caused by shipping material to digitization centres
- Privacy and consent
 - Lack of access of obsolete playback machinery and inability to preview media before participating
 - Third party privacy of family members in home movies
- Control over copyright
- Ability to withdraw material from the archives after donation

Donor concerns

The potential damage and destruction of home movies in shipping material across the country for digitization was one of the first concerns to be brought to our attention. To resolve it, HMV expanded its partnerships to include media-focused organizations located in Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Alberta which could provide digitization services.

Another concern centred around privacy and consent: How can families consent to donation when the technology to preview their VHS and miniDV tapes is not easily accessible? What to do if some family members who appeared in footage objected to their likeness being donated to an archival institution? Fortunately, during the project design process, a flexible donation arrangement was created to protect privacy and intimate family moments. Participants were asked to donate a minimum of five minutes from their digitized media carriers which sometimes contained hours of home movies. This enabled one participant [“to contribute a clip that didn’t centre people but a place”](#) to protect their family’s privacy, whereas another donated the entirety of her VHS cassette tape because [“she wanted to show other Canadians that ‘our people live in Canada too.’”](#) Unfortunately, such an arrangement created an unexpected challenge: the

donations of “short clips [under a minute in duration] because of privacy wishes of the donor” (report, p.15).

Donors were also concerned about copyright and their ability to potentially withdraw the material from the archives. In hindsight, I should have perhaps prepared an archival donation FAQ sheet for the HVM team to give participants during the application process to transparently outline the transfer of physical ownership, the retention of copyright in the donation process, the possibility of access restrictions, and the issuing of tax receipts for gift-in-kind donations to the university.

Donor and Project: Scope and Content													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewing donors enriched descriptions with embedded contextualization from personal memories Collaborative google sheet for descriptive metadata failed Difficulty matching descriptions to videos as 1:1 ratio did not exist 													
A	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	
1	Home Made	Title											
2	Control #	Ethnicity/Cultur	Donor Location	Digital Donat	Analogue Dona	Initial label	Alternate title	Source of titl	Date	Date (ISO)	Start Year	End Year	Language
127	Video 124	Latino	Lethbridge, AB	no	no	Marchant 7/8	7 Pepe Jose Marchant	✓					✓
128	Video 125	Latino	Lethbridge, AB	no	no	Marchant 8/8	8	✓					✓
129	Video 126	Ojibwe	Toronto, ON	yes		Nahwegahbo 1/1	Mark & Flo's Wedding	✓	1 Dec 1995	1995-12-01	1995	1995	✓
130	Video 127	Iran	Toronto, ON		no	Joudaki 1/5	family n - 1	✓					✓
131	Video 128	Iran	Toronto, ON		no	Joudaki 2/5	family No=1	✓	1998				Persian ✓
132	Video 129	Iran	Toronto, ON		no	Joudaki 3/5	Iran farsi	✓					✓
133	Video 130	Iran	Toronto, ON		no	Joudaki 4/5	Farsi writing in pencil	✓					✓
134	Video 131	Iran	Toronto, ON		no	Joudaki 5/5	Farsi in blue ink	✓					✓
135	Video 132	Chinese/Russian	Brandon, MB	yes	yes	Azure 27/27		✓					✓
136	Video 133	Morocco	Montreal, QC			Benziane 1/10	Marco 2004	✓					✓
137	Video 134	Morocco	Montreal, QC			Benziane 2/10	Repertoire Neice	✓					✓
138	Video 135	Morocco	Montreal, QC			Benziane 3/10	La Jfonde 1995-99?	✓					✓
139	Video 136	Morocco	Montreal, QC			Benziane 4/10	Aicha Youssa Mais on	✓					✓

Archival description

After a donor successfully applied to participate including a commitment to donate a portion of their home movies to YUL, HVM sent the material to be digitized by Charles Street Video. The donor then received a high-resolution preservation master and access copy of their entire home movies and the donor selected clips for donation. Description workflows started with a donor interview to discuss the clip(s) which HVM used to draft a description. The donor would have a chance to review the description and provide feedback – sometimes there were several back and forths – before sending them to YUL.

This collaborative approach empowered community members to self-describe their histories; thus emphasizing the project's goal of self-representation in the archives. This process also enriched descriptions as the donors could embed their personal memories in the descriptions. Often this contextual information is not apparent, or obvious to an outsider (such as an archivist) who relies on viewing the footage to describe the material. And from my perspective, this process had the power to transform the informational value of the home movie footage to include evidential information from the donor(s).

When I joined the project, I imagined collaborative description meant a shared Google Sheet where HMV, CSV, and I would collectively create and capture metadata. I devised a metadata schema that crosswalked RAD compliant descriptions (for AtoM) to the MODS forms (for Islandora). Even though I tried to make it as user-friendly as possible with drop-down menus for ISO languages, etc., I failed to grasp how overwhelming this approach would be to non-archivists who may not necessarily share my passion for spreadsheets.

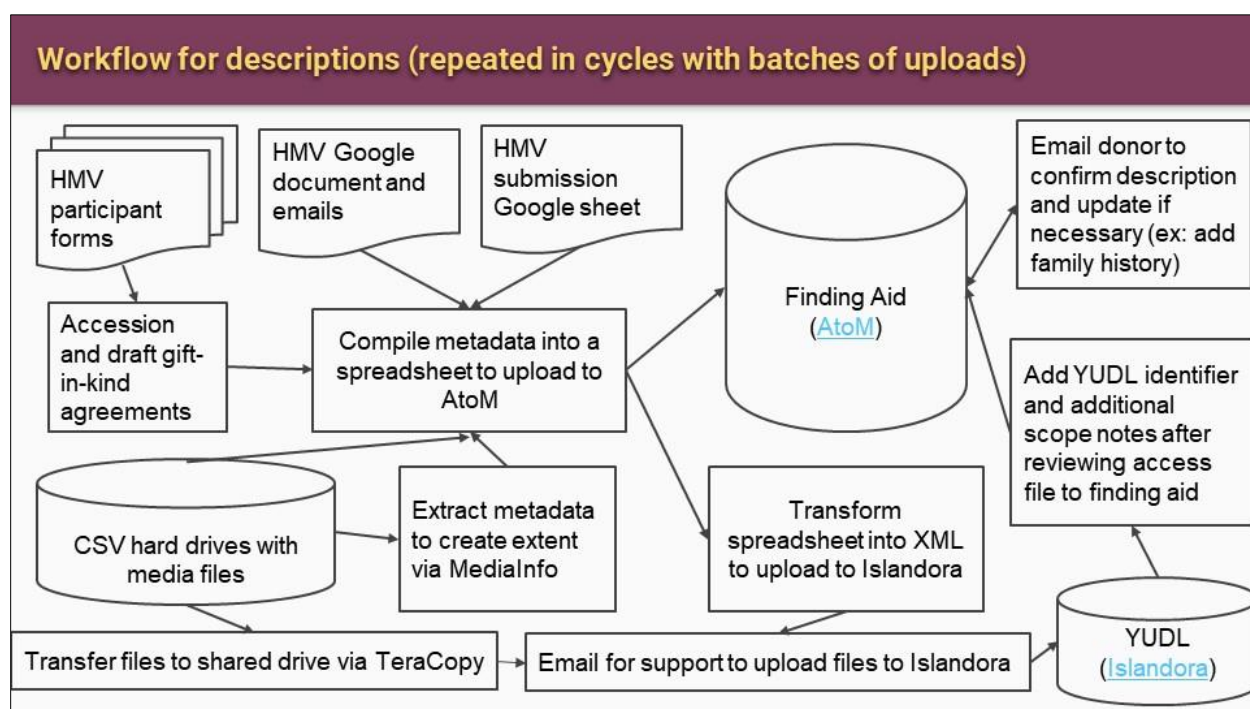
What ended up happening: HMV sent each description sent in separate emails and because this was hard to manage/track, descriptions were then submitted as one giant, compiled Google Document at the end of the project. This led to many hours of copying and pasting the scope notes into my AtoM spreadsheet. In hindsight, I could have suggested using Google Forms as a user-friendly interface to receive structured data in a spreadsheet for collaborators who aren't passionate Excel users.

As well, there wasn't always a 1:1 ratio with clips and descriptions: one donation might arrive as seven clips with one description and another donation as three clips with two descriptions. With RAD's recommendation to avoid repeating information at lower levels, I debated moving the information up to the series level when there was one description for several clips. In our Islandora instance series are not represented¹ making it difficult to mirror the description in our AtoM database if the information was moved to a higher level of description. This archival intervention would also disrupt the goal of self-representation outlined in the project, so I kept everything as it was donated and ignored RAD.

All in all, I also could have perhaps better explained the hierarchical structure of archival description to the HMV team. At the time I was perhaps distracted by the added complication of using two platforms to process the material (AtoM and Islandora). Having never used Islandora, its MODS forms were a bit overwhelming to me because it required library authority URIs for genre/forms and different ISO formats (language and dates). With these challenges at the forefront of my mind, I based the HMV metadata schema on Islandora's needs. Since a biographical sketch/administrative history field does not exist in our Islandora instance, I failed to remember, think of, and ask HMV to collect family histories. I am now planning to touch base with donors to see if they are interested in providing a family history to add additional context to the descriptive record. Eventually, Islandora's metadata needs became less intimidating and I learned how to integrate [Open Refine](#) in my workflow to transform RAD CSV descriptions for AtoM to MODS XML for Islandora for batch uploads.

This collection was also my first time processing a hybrid donation of analog and born-digital files. I often waffled with my decisions to pair digitized files with analog objects (if donated) or treat them as independent items — what to do if only a portion of the analog video was donated through multiple clips (see [Burke family videos](#)). The participation form should have clearly stated that if an analog carrier was donated, the entire digitized clip should be donated rather than a portion of clips.

¹ As series titles referenced the donating family, I changed file titles in Islandora to include the series title so that the home movies were kept together as the platform automatically sorts the videos in alphabetical order.



Workflow

After settling these debates about intellectual control of the holdings (with the help of my colleagues), the processing workflow was another complex challenge. The illustrated diagram is an attempt to explain how the collection was acquired, received, described, and imported into AtoM and YUDL.

Descriptions were compiled with information from multiple sources:

- HMV participant forms: donor contact information and immediate source of acquisition
- HMV Google document/email: scope and content notes
- HMV submission Google sheet: title proper, original media carrier
- CSV hard drives containing media files (transferred to the shared drive using [TeraCopy](#)): extent (duration, file size), scope notes, supplied title
- [MediaInfo](#) extracted metadata file to build an extent (duration, file size, etc.)
- Series content notes from the gift-in-kind description of accession

After the material was ingested into the two platforms², additional metadata from YUDL (the unique identifier generated by the system) was added to AtoM in the alternative identifier field with a matching associated material note indicating that a digital copy was available in YUDL.

² Importation to AtoM simply required a spreadsheet. However, with Islandora, I had to copy and paste each description to a web-based form. This process took an hour to create the eight descriptive records; YUL application support specialist Walter Griffatong would then upload the videos after I created an IT ticket with the record ID with the file name/location in the shared drive for support to schedule a batch ingest and avoid overwhelming the system. In March 2020, thanks to the inspiration from [Sara Allain's tutorial](#) and support from YUL digital assets librarian Nick Ruest, I learned to create customized XML templates and convert the AtoM CSVs to XML files in

With the HMV collection processed in batches, the workflow was an iterative process — refined over time as I gained confidence with my skills and knowledge of the platforms and related tools, such as Open Refine and MediaInfo, leading to the automation of some descriptive fields including the extraction of technical metadata from the media files via Media Info to develop extents.³

final thoughts

Left to right: Courtesy of George and Clara Chan family, Charles and Seaman families, Trinh Nha Truon.



Final thoughts

Open Refine to facilitate batch uploads to YUDL. Ruest had to correct my template several times before it formed a valid file — in fairness, this was my first time templating XML and this was all happening in the first few days of the pandemic! Before conversion to a MODS based XML file, the AtoM data required several transformations including merging the eventEndDates to eventStartDates to a single field where appropriate (estimated dates, periods covering a range of time, etc.) including adjusting the ISO time standard, separating delimiters for languages and subject access points to multiple columns, and switching ISOs for languages (and adding language notes for dialects not represented in this ISO). Already overwhelmed at this point and only somewhat vaguely familiar with the command line, Ruest used a Python script to separate each description in the massive XML file to create its own XML file for batch upload into Islandora via the command line.

³ As an emerging professional with little experience describing digital records, extent — perhaps my favourite descriptive field because of its prescriptive nature? — came with its own intellectual challenges. In combining the directives outlined in Chapter 7 (Moving Images) and Chapter 9 (Records in Electronic Form) in RAD, one could easily create the world's longest physical description with the information easily captured in MediaInfo and the [CONCAT formula in LibreOffice](#) [1 video file (1 min., 19 sec.; 605 MiB) : col., 29.970 fps Constant, Progressive, MPEG-4, NTSC, ProResVersion 0422 HQ, 4:3, apch, YUV, 4:2:2, sd., PCM, sowt, 1 536 kb/s, 48.0 kHz, 16 bits ; 720 x 486 pixels]. Rather than overwhelm the researcher (how many actually need to know the codec before viewing the footage?), I formulated a template for digital video files [ex: 1 video file (1 min., 30 sec. ; 0.1 GB) : MP4, col., si., 16:9 ; 1280 x 720 pixels] based on examples provided in each chapter [1 videocassette (1 hr., 38 min., 12 sec.) : col., Video 8, sd. -- 1 sound recording (mp3). -- 1 zip disk (961 MB)] and what I considered a “golden minimum” for the needs of researchers and archivists.

In setting out to prepare this presentation, I hoped to talk about acquiring and preserving BIPOC records; it is certainly easier to speak about the technical aspects involving workflows, platforms, and descriptions. I need(ed) more time away from the project to reflect and analyze my experience. I am also trying to unlearn many traditional archival practices and processes that can lead to inequitable processing, while also respecting the scope of this project and not burdening it with the need for perfection.

So, while I am still digesting many aspects about this experience: the project, its design, and outcomes from an archival perspective, I hope this presentation has demonstrated the complexity and incredible success of the project given its limited timeframe. Collaborative acquisition and description with multiple donors, partnerships, and stakeholders is incredibly labour intensive. Never underestimate the time, labour, and financial resources required to undertake such a project; it's always more than you imagine. Archivists must clearly and explicitly explain archival concepts and institutional practices as early as possible to stakeholders (this can be extremely difficult for an emerging professional hired on a contract). And – I can't believe I'm saying it – more in-person meetings between partners or regularly scheduled meetings to provide space to address questions and gaps in workflows.

While there are still many “next steps” to complete, I'll end this presentation with one highlighted in the report: “Revisit the metadata again in the future. Identities and how they are described are constantly shifting and needless to say, so will the metadata which describes these artifacts in an archival setting. The language used should never be considered final, but should reflect the potentially shifting vernacular language of the community in question, in order to maintain accessibility in the future” (p. 36).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at kcohenp@yorku.ca.

Recommended reading, podcasts, and videos

- Project documentation
- Press coverage
- Recommended reading
 - IBPOC home movies
 - Archives and IBPOC communities
 - Home movies



Recommended reading, podcasts, and videos

Project documentation and press coverage

- [Home Made Visible Report: an Archival Project by the Regent Park Film Festival](#)
- [Home Made Visible collection](#)
- [Home Made Visible: home movies, archives, and IBPOC communities](#) (NCPH History@Work blog post)
- [Home Made Visible press coverage](#)
- [Myseum of Canada: Documenting Diverse Histories panel recording](#)

Home movies

- Archivists Alley [podcast]
 - [Patricia Ledesma Villon: The Challenges of Home Movies & the Complexity of Asian American Representation](#)
 - [Lynne Kirste- Home Movies at the Academy and the Brilliant Power of Representation](#)
 - [Episode 6: Erica Lopez- Mexican American Home Movies, Being “Seen,” and Gauging Class in Amateur Films](#)
- [Ali Kazimi Random Acts of Legacy Q&A](#)
- [Fuentes Family Home Movies Collection – Caroline Frick](#)
- [Archivage et transmission des films de famille dans l’environnement numérique](#)